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MARCH'S FAMOUS FUNNY FARCES

MARCH BROTHERS, Publishers, LEBANON, OHIO

A Proposal in Grandma's Day

BY JEANNETTE JOYCE

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CHARACTERS

CHARITY—*A prim maiden, very proper.*

DAVID—*A bashful youth.*

MA ALLEN—*A buxom matron.*

PA ALLEN—*A serious man of middle age.*

SCENE: *Costumes and furnishings as old-fashioned as can be obtained.*

(Curtain raises on kitchen in Allen home with Charity seated peeling apples.
She looks up excitedly as a rather timid knock is heard, then as the knock is repeated she forces herself to be calm and opens door.)

DAVID (entering with much embarrassment): How do you do, Charity?
(Standing stiffly.)

CHARITY: I do well. (Long pause.) How do you do, David?

DAVID: I do well. (Long pause.) How does your father and mother?

CHARITY: They do well, too, David. (Very long pause; much shuffling of feet on David's part and twisting of apron strings on Charity's.)

DAVID: You was peelin' apples, Charity?

CHARITY: Yes, David.

DAVID (seeing a chance): May I help you, Charity? I'm a first rate peeler so mother says.

CHARITY: I don't care if you do, David. You can sit over here. (Places him at opposite side of table where he sits down and looks hopelessly at his hat still in his hand.)

DAVID: What shall I do with this, Charity? (Charity takes it and hangs it up with great care—silence, during which both work steadily. After clearing his throat several times, David resumes.) I didn't come to peel apples tonight, Charity.

CHARITY (*demurely surprised*): Didn't you?

DAVID: No, I came to ask a question—a question (*hesitating*). PSU 101

CHARITY (*demurely trying to help him*): Was it a riddle, David, or a conundrum you're going to ask?

DAVID: No, not just exactly that, but something like it. My, these apples are knotty.

CHARITY: Yes, Pa says they are considerably wormy this year.

DAVID (*after more silence*): Do you like peelin' apples, Charity?

CHARITY: I like it right smart.

DAVID: We got a whole orchard full of apples that goes to waste every year for want of peelin', and I came over tonight to say something to you.

CHARITY: About the apples, David?

DAVID: Well, yes; 'twas about apples and 'twasn't. (*Cries out as he cuts his finger*.)

CHARITY (*going around table to him*): Oh! David, you've cut your finger. Let me wrap it up for you. (*Proceeds to do so*.)

DAVID (*encouraged by her nearness*): I remember now what I came for, Charity; I came to ask you to—to marry me.

CHARITY (*starting back*): Oh! David, you oughtn't—really you oughtn't.

DAVID: Why we've been keepin' company two years come next month, and I've never gone to see another girl in all that time. Won't you marry me, Charity?

CHARITY: I don't know, David, that must be as Pa and Ma decides. Ask them. (*Pa and Ma enter on last words and all David's embarrassment returns*.)

PA ALLEN: Good evenin', David; was you speakin' of something we could do for you?

DAVID: Well, no—yes—not exactly.

PA ALLEN: Like to borrow something, would you?

DAVID: No, I don't want to borrow anything.

PA ALLEN: Buy then? Your father was considerin' a couple of calves I—

MA ALLEN (*putting hand on Pa's arm*): Pa, let David talk.

PA ALLEN (*not grasping situation as he looks around*): Oh! Well, talk, young man.

DAVID (*forcing speech*): How—how's the corn comin' on for you, Mr. Allen?

PA ALLEN: Why first rate, David. Would you like to engage some seed of me this fall?

DAVID: No, I don't want to engage no seed corn—I—I—

MA ALLEN (*in Pa's ear*): Pa, ask him if he wants you to give him something.

PA ALLEN (*mystified*): David, is there anything I can give you?

DAVID (*jumping at this suggestion*): Your daughter—I want to marry her.

PA ALLEN: Well, now that is something. We'll have to ask the boss. What do you say, mother?

MA ALLEN: I say it is no more than I've expected—girls go ahead and get engaged so easy these days. It's not like it was when I was young.

PA ALLEN: Now mother, you forget. Don't you remember—

MA ALLEN (*breaking in*): There's one thing I do remember (*moving over to table*), and that's these apples. Come on, Pa, and help peel. For if ever they're tended to I'll have it to do.

DAVID (*taking Charity's hand, but glancing over at Ma and Pa*): I've a notion, a great notion, to—

CHARITY: To what, David?

DAVID: To kiss you, Charity.

(*Curtain*)



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